

Introduction to the Seven Churches

Date: January 20, 2021

Text: Revelation 2:1-7

- Review Questions:

- What's the significance of the number seven?
 - *number of completeness, fullness, or perfection*
 - What is the seven spirits (or seven fold spirit) in 1:4?
 - *The perfect Holy Spirit*
 - (Isaiah 11:2, 7 things said about the Spirit)
 - Someone tell me the meaning of one of the descriptions of Jesus' appearance in 1:12-16.
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 - What three offices or positions does Jesus' appearance bring to mind?
 - *Priest, King, Judge*
 - What are the seven golden lamp stands?
 - *the seven churches*
 - Why do you think the churches are represented by lamp stands?
 - *Light of the world, connection with Israel in the OT/Jewish Tradition that was represented by a lamp stand (Zechariah 4)*
 - Who are the "angels of the seven churches?"
 - *Most likely heavenly angels that guard the churches or represent them in heaven*
 - Why do you think this was written to seven churches?
 - *written to real churches, but also symbolizes this message is for the whole church at all times*
- ## - Overview of the Seven Churches
- Every Church has a reference to the vision of Jesus in Chapter 1
 - Ephesus: Seven stars/lampstands
 - Smyrna: First/last, dead/came to life
 - Pergamum: Double-edged Sword
 - Thyatira: Flaming Eyes/feet like bronze
 - Sardis: Seven spirits/stars

- Philadelphia: Holy/keys
- Laodicea: Faithful witness (1:5)
- Most of the churches have serious problems
 - Exceptions: Smyrna and Philadelphia
- Jesus' messages to the churches has themes that are further explored in the book.
 - False synagogue (2:9, 3:9) contrasted with the the Lion of the Tribe of Judah and the true Israel (5:5-10; 7:4-8)
 - "Ten day trial" (2:10) seems like the "little while" in (6:9-17)
 - Spiritual protection (3:10) by a divine name (2:17; 3:12) much like the Spiritually sealed (7; 14:1)
 - Many more
- The churches form a "chiastic structure"
 - Outside two about to cease being a church
 - next two in have no weaknesses and are encouraged
 - The middle three are mixed
 - Emphasis usually lies in the outside 2
 - Point: Churches are in serious trouble
 - Insofar as 7 churches represent the church universal:
 - Churches are usually not very healthy
 - But always a few that stand out like Smyrna and Philadelphia
 - Purpose of this (for them and for us): stay alert, don't compromise, shake those awake who are compromising the faith, to stay faithful in our witness and endure.
- 2 things:
 - These letters weren't just for churches back then.
 - This book isn't just about things that are going to happen.
 - already-not yet
 - Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:17-21
 - 1 John 2:18